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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **U.S. Africa Command Commander Makes First Visit to Nigeria**

The commander of the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), General Carter F. Ham, arrived in Nigeria today, to participate in a series of meetings with senior Nigerian officials and U.S. Embassy personnel.

This is General Ham's first visit to Nigeria since taking command of AFRICOM March 9, 2011. While in Nigeria, General Ham will meet with leadership from the Nigerian Ministry of Defense and Chief of Defense Staff, as well as leadership from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Peace and Security Directorate. These discussions will provide General Ham insight into the U.S.-Nigerian military relationship and Nigeria's military priorities for the future.

U.S. Africa Command participates in military-to-military engagements with the Nigerian Armed Forces at the request of the Nigerian government. Joint exercises and training activities help build capacity and improve military interoperability between the two nations and within the region. U.S. military partnership with the Nigerian Armed Forces also emphasizes professional development and the shared belief that an apolitical military, which is subordinate to civilian leadership and respects human rights, is an important component of a democracy.

Nigeria is an important contributor to regional security and a valuable peacekeeping partner worldwide. Visits such as these ensure that military cooperation is well coordinated between senior leadership and provides General Ham an opportunity to hear directly from Nigeria's leaders to better understand their defense and security-related issues.

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*Other relevant information about U.S. policies and programs in Nigeria can be found on our website: <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov>.*

